

Halifax harbor in an arc intended to close the port to all shipping. Minesweepers of the Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy undertook the dangerous and exacting job of sweeping the mines. In one day they cleared a channel 1,200 yards wide to permit a convoy to sail. The minesweepers, having opened the harbor for the convoys, proceeded to mop up the whole minefield.

The crew of the Canadian destroyer Athabaskan demonstrated masterly seamanship after the destroyer was damaged by a nazi aerial glider bomb in the Bay of Biscay in August, 1943. The Athabaskan was operating as senior ship of a group of Royal Navy vessels when attacked by German bombers. Three bombers aimed their bombs at the Athabaskan. The destroyer succeeded in avoiding the bombs dropped by two of the aircraft. A glider bomb from the third hit the destroyer, killing five and wounding 12 of the crew. With the boiler room and two fuel tanks flooded with sea water, the Athabaskan made home port at the remarkable speed of 12 knots.

In October, 1943, when the sinking of H.M.C.S. St. Croix was announced, it was made known that this destroyer while protecting a convoy in the Atlantic the previous year had given chase to two submarines, sinking one of them.

1944-1945.

In the early spring of 1944 the R.C.N. expanded further into a balanced fighting force with heavy offensive power. Its ships and men served in many battle theatres before and after the huge invasion concentration in June: In the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and in the north Pacific.

In January, 1944, it was announced that the corvettes, Snowberry and Calgary, assisted by the Royal Navy frigate Nene, sank a submarine while on convoy duty.

During April it was announced that the first Canadian-built frigate to engage in enemy action, the Wasquesiu, attacked and destroyed a U-boat about 500 miles north of the Azores, while defending a valuable convoy.

At the end of May came the news that the Canadian corvettes Chilliwack and Fennel, the frigate St. Catharines, and the destroyer Gatineau combined in an operation to sink a submarine.

In June it was revealed that the destroyer St. Laurent, assisted by the frigate Swansea, destroyed a German submarine in the North Atlantic. Also in this month came the announcement of the sinking of another enemy submarine by the R.C.N. frigate, the Prince Rupert, assisted by two United States vessels and a Grumman Avenger plane.

The Swansea scored again later in the sinking of another U-boat. At the same time a probable kill was credited equally to the Canadian corvette, Camrose, and a British warship while on Atlantic duty.

In August it was announced that three Royal Navy motor gunboats, manned by Canadians, sunk five ships and routed an entire convoy off the Yugoslavia coast.

Early in September the Tribal destroyers, H.M.C.S. Haida and Iroquois, took part in an action that resulted in the sinking of an entire seven-ship convoy carrying troops attempting to escape from St. Nazaire. A destroyer force led by H.M.C.S. Qu'Appelle and including the Assiniboine, Skeena and Restigouche sank four enemy armed trawlers and a supply ship. Later in the month H.M.C.S. Iroquois was engaged in two actions against enemy shipping between Brest and Lorient. The first action was an attack made on a German convoy which forced the ships within the range of coastal batteries. A few days later another group of enemy ships was met, and a total of two minesweepers, three supply ships and three escort vessels were sunk. Late in the month the Haida joined a British destroyer, the Eskimo, to sink an enemy U-boat.